

CONFERENCE *connection*

Alabama • Georgia • Mississippi

South Carolina • Tennessee • NW Florida



SOUTHEAST UCC Conference

February 15, 2016

Jottings from June

As I have been in various conversations with people the last few weeks and reminded them that Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, falls on February 10, the common response has been, "Wow, Easter is really early this year." I was thinking about this as I began to see friends on Facebook make the posting that they were giving up Facebook for Lent to spend time in reflection and quiet personal contemplation.



The idea of giving something up for Lent does not fit with my theological perspective about the role of Jesus who becomes the Christ in his human example as he lived and moved among the people of his time. I understand the penitential nature of denying oneself and using that as the focus of reflection on the sacrifice made on Good Friday. But I think that Jesus took on a larger role in obeying the will of his Divine Parent. So I tend to add something to my life that is meaningful for Lent that will be of benefit to the world or those around me. And to be honest, many people I know give up things that seem to be a very small sacrifice. If they are giving something up to spend more time in reflection and prayer, wouldn't it be a more meaningful purpose to add that time to a busy schedule as a mark of intentionality about engaging in a sacrificial act?

I am not criticizing anyone's Lenten discipline. Any act that draws us closer to God and allows us to become more knowledgeable about our own faith values and spend more time in prayer and reflection is a good and faithful act. But I do wonder about the internal negotiation in giving up something so something can be added. I have been musing about how many people who might give up chocolate for Lent (a very common choice) will find some other thing this year so that they can still enjoy the Valentine candy they might receive from loved ones. Giving up something we love does not increase our love for God in our daily lives. So I encourage you to consider the theological foundation for whatever you deny or add this Lenten season. My prayer is that it will increase your faith and love and knowledge of the One who holds us in eternal love.

Kudos for Yearbook Submissions

Congratulations to Garden of Grace UCC in Columbia, SC where the pastor is Rev. Andy Sidden. Garden of Grace submitted the first online yearbook forms for 2015!

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Coming Events

- Executive Committee**
Tue, February 16, 2016
Web and Teleconference
- SEC Staff Meeting**
Thu, March 3, 2016
Conference Office
- Board of Directors**
Tue, March 15, 2016
Web Meeting
- Application Deadline for Conference Grants**
Fri, March 18, 2016

Conference Staff

- June Boutwell**
Designated Conference Minister
jboutwell@secucc.org

A reminder that yearbook forms are due March 7, 2016.

Conferences that have a 10-14% increase in congregational reporting from the previous year

- \$300 UCC Resources Gift Certificate

Conferences that have a 15-19% increase in congregational reporting from the previous year

- \$400 UCC Resources Gift Certificate

Conferences that have a 20% or greater increase in congregational reporting from the previous year

- \$500 UCC Resources Gift Certificate

A personalized Conference Statistical Mini-Profile
NEW! Most Improved Award-for the Conference that demonstrates the greatest increase in reporting percentage from their previous three-year reporting average

- Pizza party at Conference Annual Meeting

From the Conference Office

Spring 2016 Conference Grants

January 18 through March 18, 2016 marks the next application cycle for "Transforming Churches, Transforming Lives" Conference grants.

During this time congregations may apply in 3 different ways:

1. Online at secucc.org/giving/capital-campaign-grant-application
2. Mailing a paper application to the Southeast Conference office
3. Emailing an electronic application to dspearman@secucc.org



Transforming Churches • Transforming Lives
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Connect with Us!



Congratulations PATHWAYS Level 1 Grads!

PATHWAYS Theological Education, the leadership formation ministry of the Southeast Conference in affiliation with participating UCC Conferences, is proud to announce the two graduates who have successfully completed the Level 1 program in December, 2015.

Rich Jensen (Larchwood UCC, Larchwood, IA) from the Iowa Conference and Lisa Williams (First Congregational UCC, Moline, IL) from the Illinois Conference, after finishing two years of Level 1 course work, are now enrolled in the Level 2 program to continue their journey in theological education and ministerial training to be equipped for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ.

We wish to lift up their hard work throughout the years, and may God's blessings be upon their paths for service in the wider church."



We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2016. Each month, we will publish a weekly list for the month and post them weekly on our Facebook page. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

- [Click here to download the entire 2016 prayer list](#)

Highlights for this month:

- **Alice Kobayashi** died January 22. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Carol Kobayashi and Rev. Timothy Downs of Atlanta and son and daughter-in-law Richard and Susan Kobayashi of Belmont, MA. A memorial service will be held at the Julia Thompson Smith Chapel on the campus of Agnes Scott College on February 15th at 11:00 am; Rev. Timothy Downs and Rev. Susannah Davis officiating. Memorial donations can be made to Kirkwood United Church of Christ, Atlanta, GA (www.kirkwooducc.com). Online condolences can be made at www.astumer.com.
- **Reverend Richard Lewis Lammers** died at the age of 90 on February 2, 2016 at the Uplands Retirement Village in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee, where he had lived since retiring in 1990 from missionary work in Japan. Dick is survived by his wife of 66 years, Martha; children and their spouses - Don (Sally), of Golden, CO; Wayne (Cheryl), of Portland, OR; Ken (Shukuko), of Yokohama, Japan; and June (Dave) Lymburner, of Invermere, Canada; Grandchildren - Michael (Christina), Kei (Hiroaki), Yui, and Jamie, a great-grandson, Paxton. Dick's celebration of life was held on Saturday, February 13. Memorial gifts may be given to the Uplands Retirement Village Cravath Endowment Fund, the Pleasant Hill Community Church Scholarship Fund, or Cumberland County Habitat for Humanity. Condolences may be sent to the family in care of Dick's wife, Martha Lammers, P.O. Box 406, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578-0406.
- **Raymonda Speller** will be installed at Community Congregational UCC, Montgomery AL at 10:45 am.
- **Bruce Schoup** will be installed at Peace Congregational UCC, Clemson NC at 5:00 pm, February 28, 2016.
- Prayers for **Roy and Evelyn Siewert** on the recent death of their son-in-law.
- Prayers for **Rev. Laurie Hill** as she recovers from surgery. She is serving Fairfield Glade Community Church in Tennessee.
- Prayers for **Rev. Bob Hurst**, United Church of Huntsville as he recovers from surgery.
- Continued prayers for **Rev. Michael McCaulley**, Peace Church, Clemson South Carolina as he undergoes a bone marrow transplant at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. [Read more...](#)

Churches in Transition:

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia;

Church of the Savior, Alpharetta Georgia; Pensacola UCC, Pensacola Florida; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Beloved Community, Birmingham Alabama; First United Church, Belvidere Tennessee.

News from Around the Conference and Beyond

Sister Helen Prejean Presentation at Uplands on March 13

Sister Helen Prejean, founder of the Ministry Against the Death Penalty, will be at Pleasant Hill UCC on March 13. Sister Helen, a Roman Catholic nun, is perhaps best known for her book, *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty*. [Read more...](#)

Dan Forrest's *Requiem for the Living* on Feb 27

Decatur UCC is proud to co-sponsor Our Song's presentation of Dan Forrest's *Requiem for the Living* on Saturday, February 27th at 7:30 pm. Part of pre-sold ticket sales supports Decatur UCC as well as Our Song's mission. [Read more...](#)

Installation of Rev. Bruce Schoup at Peace Congregational on Feb 28

You are invited to the installation of the Reverend Bruce Schoup as pastor of Peace Congregational Church United Church of Christ on Sunday February 28 at 5 pm. 226 Pendleton Road, Clemson SC. Please RSVP to clemsonucc@gmail.com or (864) 624-7646. (note to clergy: robes and stoles optional)

Emory's Tribute to Rev. Channing R. Jeschke

Emory University recently paid tribute to Channing R. Jeschke, Candler School of Theology Librarian. Rev. Jeschke was a long-time member of Central Congregational in Atlanta and also an ordained UCC minister. [Read more...](#)

Building an Inclusive Church on March 11-12

Church of the Savior UCC-Alpharetta, GA has partnered with nearby Johns Creek Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)-Johns Creek, GA to co-sponsor an ecumenical workshop, "Building an Inclusive Church," March 11-12, 2016. [Read more...](#)

Seeking the Beloved Community: A Community Conversation on Feb 27

You are invited to join in the first of a series of crucial conversations on race, law enforcement and the law sponsored by the Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice. This is an opportunity for all participants to engage in constructive dialogue on these critical issues. [Read more...](#)

Healthy Boundaries for Clergy and Church Leaders

The Southeast Conference, in partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia, are pleased to offer two Healthy Boundaries training sessions for clergy and church

leaders. [Read more...](#)